

and no place to go. They also can't believe that the only thing standing in the way of making these beds available is the funding to reopen these badly needed beds. The ward is already there. The license for the bed is already issued. The beds...the needed facilities are already there. The psychiatrist and support staff are already there. The only thing lacking is to hire the nursing staff to reopen it which could be opened in a month, two months at the most. The Governor says that the need isn't as great as funding. What is the result of allowing this gap to exist? It means more successful suicides, more dangerous incidents involving mentally ill persons and other persons. It means continuing to leave the brunt and consequences of the program with the county and law enforcement officials. Let no one be misled, the problem is so great that these 34 beds will not cure it but it will help. Right now, in the Omaha area...and you Omaha senators ought to really take note of this, Senator Hannibal, Senator Ashford, Senator Abboud, and some of you in the Omaha area where you've got 13 people on the waiting list to go someplace and no place to go and it increases or decreases day by day but 13 as of today. I wish each and every one of you would really check into this and when you really see the need if you would, there would be 49 votes up there. I have never seen a more united effort by a group of people such as the Nebraska Psychiatry Society passing a strongly worded unanimous resolution pointing to the urgent need of the 34 beds; the Nebraska Medical Association, Hospital Associations, Health Care Association, St. Joseph's Hospital, Lutheran Medical Center, Richard Young Hospital, Immanuel Medical Center, Veterans' Hospital, Veterans Service Officers, over 20 county attorneys and sheriffs in the geographic area, County Attorneys Association, Creighton University Med Center, University of Nebraska Med Center; Dr. John Baldwin, Lincoln psychiatrist; Dr. James Wengert, Veterans Hospital Psychiatrist; Dr. Severa, plus 10 psychiatrists, four psychologists, eight social workers, 10 nurses and 75, other members of hospital staff and citizen advocates from the Omaha metropolitan area; Douglas-Sarpy County Attorneys, Douglas County Public Defender, county commissioners throughout the region, the League of Municipalities and government officials. My fellow senators, we are talking about lives, of people. This is a decision you have to make whether you care about human beings and want to help these people and the process used...the resources we already have in place of the regional center. As good stewards for the benefit of the taxpayers, we should be funding these beds. There is no other